Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

BY JOHN G. GIVEN.] EBENSBURG, THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 1849. VOL. 5.—NO. 29.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE BANKER'S CLERK.

BY R. H. ADDISON.

Michael Fleming was an excellent clerk —a pains-taking clerk, in the well known office (reader you have doubtless visited it) of Messrs. Smith & Co., in High street, Such a plain and straight forward direction is surely enough. I feel it unnecessary to add either the Christian name of the principal partner, or the surnames of the juniors—the exact sort of traders they were, or the precise town in which the said High street was situate; such minute details would be but a work of superrogation.

Now, as I said before, Michael Fleming was the very type of what a clerk ought to be. He had no intelligence of his own; his thoughts, like his letters, seemed to be the transcript of others; he knew no emotions; no maddening pulses disturbed the even tenor of his life—indeed, people went so far as to say, he had no feeling at all, for he never sought the company of a female in his life—he never was known to give a farthing in charity—he only drew one half of his salary—the rest had accumulated in his employer's hands, and amounted already to a large sum. His brother clerks called him a screw; old Smith looked on him as a treasure.

Now, although you are without doubt aware that Smith was a cross little man, yet I must add, from personal experience, that though testy and hasty, yet he was upright and fair in all his dealings; and though severe to a fault in money matters, could well appreciate generosity in others. In addition to his bank (I've let his trade slip out) he had some large farms, round about the city where his firm had for forty years flourished, and where, as the old lady says, "If he's not gone—he lives there still."

One of these farms was rented to an old and infirm couple who had seen better days, and who yearly became poorer and poorer, as their years increased and their infirmities too. To this farm would Michael Fleming, however walk out every Sunday after church; and, in the course of time, it was discovered, that the companion of his promenade was a sprightly and artless maiden, the daughter of the newly appointed postmaster, a distant relation of the old couple, who delighted in the name of Scroope. When ice begins to thaw, it melts quickly; so the heart of Michael Fleming, once touched, rapidly unsteeled itself; and in a few months he was declared the accepted lover of pretty Mary Rigby.

Such was the position of my *dramatis personæ*, when, one fine morning, old Smith called Michael into his little back den, desiring of him the account book of his farms. Michael walked slowly but he was soon in the presence of his superior, who, taking up spectacles, throwing himself back in his chair, and crossing his right leg over the left, addressed him in a somewhat sharp tone—

'Turn to Scroope's account.'

Michael did so.

'How does it stand?'

'Three quarters due last lady-day, sir.'

'You know them I believe?'

A bow from the clerk afforded an affirmative to the banker.

'Are they able to pay?'

'I fear not, sir.'

'Not even a part?'

'None, sir.'

'Then go and bundle them out, neck and crop. I'll not have such people on my farms.'

'They are old, sir: they have no means of paying,' grumbled Michael Fleming.

'Sell their furniture; mark me, go and get the necessary measures taken to sell them up.'

'They'll starve, sir.'

'That's their affair; yours is to do as I desire you.'

'Certainly, sir,' modestly replied Michael; and taking up his book again he left the room.

Old Smith felt a keen twinge about the heart; but he was determined not to relent —it would seem as if he was ruled by his clerk—'pshaw! it's their own fault,' muttered the rich old banker, half aloud. 'I always pay my rent, or I should deserve the same;' and with this salvo to his conscience, entirely forgetting the difference between a millionaire and one of the million, the man of money got up and began to examine some doubtful, and consequently exciting debts in his ledger.

An hour after old smith was disturbed in his employment by the sudden entrance of Michael, who looked sadly pale, and a tear trickled in the corner of his eye.

'You have been about the Scroopes?'

'Yes, sir—but it's not about that, sir, I took the liberty of entering.'

'Well, then what is it?'

'I've bad news, sir—very bad news, sir,' and his countenance bore out the truth of his statement. 'I am sorry to ask it; but I want, if you please, sir, my little balance.'

'What do you want with it?' coldly demanded the banker.

'Family misfortunes, sir.'

"Pooh, pooh—don't believe a word of it—you have been gaming, Michael; I know you have no relatives—or perhaps—

'No, sir—no; indeed, its rather' eagerly put in Michael.

Well, well, it's no business of mine—let me see—the amount is forty-three pounds—'

'Ten and fourpence.'

'Exactly so—there take the cheque to the cashier. I've nothing to do with your mode of spending money; I confess this sudden demand for it surprises me.'

Michael answered with a deep sigh, and left the room. An hour afterwards, the cashier was sent for; and in a much more, all the clerks were talking about Fleming's love of play. These reports were unhapily confirmed next morning, when one of the party confidently told the others that Michael (who did not yet arrived) had been heard by one of the maid servants taking leave of Mary Rigby for ever; that as far as he could glean—and she had placed her ear close to the key-hole—the poor fellow was now penniless, and that the father would not hear of the match; that they both parted bitterly, and parted in the forlorn hope of seeing better times.

Just as this little group had concluded, Michael entered the counting house, and truth to say, his whole appearance and manner confirmed the truth of the servant girl's statement. He had evidently been weeping, and he walked straight to the chief partner's door and tapped at it, without even a smile of recognition towards his brethren.

'Come in,' rounded the voice of Smith.

Michael entered—his superior looked at him sternly, seeing but little inclination on the part of the clerk to open the conversation, demanded what he wanted.

'I have come to bring you the rent you desired me to get from the Scroopes yesterday.'

'I thought you said they could not pay?'

'I imagined, sir; but I believe they have received unexpected remittance.'

'Then, sir, how dare you take away their character by asserting their inability to pay their rent! for shame, for shame, Fleming, I fear you are getting unsteady.'

The poor clerk did not reply, but stood, evidently having something on his mind which he dreaded to unburden himself of; presently mustering up a sort of desperate courage, he suddenly exclaimed—

'I am very sorry, sir, but I must leave your service.'

Had a cannon ball entered through the window, old Smith could not have been more astonished.

'You are determined to do so?' angrily demanded the banker on recovering his breath.

'I am, sir—nothing can change my resolve.'

'Then go to—Bath,' roared the festy old gentleman; for he felt angry with himself for having thus savagely treated his useful clerk; and when a man is angry with himself, of *course*, he is doubly so with the rest of the world.

Poor Michael Fleming sobbed out an inaudible 'God bless you, sir,' and left the room to seek his fortunes in the wide world. Many months elapsed before this pair again met.

The spring had passed, the summer had lost its beauty, and autumn had set in; when late one evening Mary Rigby might have been seen walking along the narrow path, which borders the river Savern, in company with a smart, yet malancholy looking youth, dressed in the uniform of a British soldier. Need I add that that soldier was no other than the once happy clerk; the now, poor servant of his country, for whose defence he was about to leave his native shores and probably perish in some foreign land.

He had come to take his last adieu of her he treasured, and to record his unutterable love—for he loved her as a man *should* love; and she, like a true woman, only loved him the better for his misfortunes. —His arm was round her waist, and, truth to tell, 'she seemed to like it so;' and as he now came within sight of the Scroope's Farm, he once more reiterated his assertions of unchanging affection, and vowed through life till death to think only of her; and then, as she cried and sobbed, endeavored to console and comfort her by swearing that he would do such deeds as must ensure promotion; and then he would return and wed her, for whom alone he wished to live. The poor orphan (for the postmaster had died soon after Michael's abrupt departure) looked up and smiled through her tears, and willingly shared his dream—for when an innocent female loves, she cannot doubt. At this moment the noise of a horse tearing along the pathway was heard, and presently through the twilight was seen a horseman coming towards them at full speed. The animal had evidently gained the mastery; the rider had no longer any control over him. Mary rushed up the bank, and Michael springing forward would have endeavored to have arrested the maddened creature in his wild career; when suddenly swerving, it leaped with its helpless burthen into the deep stream. A moment more and Fleming was in the water; he was an expert swimmer, and he hesitated not to risk his life to save that of an unhappy stranger. Poor Mary screamed for help; but it was too late to procure assistance; and in intense agony she watched her lover, as he dived and dived again in anxious expectancy of succoring the drowning man, whose horse had safely landed on the opposite bank, and he was already galloping away; presently he succeeded in his noble aim; and, after a few minutes too harrowing to describe, he was again standing beside Mary—the equestrian lying insensibly on the grass. After many vain efforts to restore circulation by chaffing his hands and limbs, Michael lifted the inanimate sufferer on his shoulders, and staggered with him to the cottage of the Scroopes.

Now the old couple, like many other respectable old couples in England, loved to sit up; and after a long chat about former times, invariably closed the business of the day by reading out alternately a chapter in the Bible. In this pious duty they were occupied when Michael tottered in, completely exhausted by the weight of his burthen. The old Scroope's instantly closed the sacred volume, and, making up to the inanimate form before them, at once recognized in the half drowned man their landlord Smith, the banker. Michael also with a start beheld, in the human being whose life he had saved, his late master; and not wishing to be known, would instantly have left the house; but was dissuaded from doing so for a few hours.—Having after a short explanation, made the good people promise not to let the banker know who was his preserver, he allowed himself to be persuaded to remain till the morning; for, after all, Michael loved his old patron, and did not like to leave him before he had heard of the surgeon's opinion.

In a few hours, that functionary had been there; and after expending the usual jargon of his craft, which, in simple cases, stands in lieu of more serious directions, pronounced his patient 'more frightened than hurt" and took his leave, allowing his rich customer to come to himself by the simple yet efficacious resources of nature. Smith, after a long time fully recovered his strength and senses; and as soon recognised not only the room which belonged to him, but his old tenants standing beside his bed, attending him with anxious solicitude. The nasty, troublesome little inward monitor, called conscience, officiously whispered to his heart—'and these are the people you would have plunged into a goal, or sent adrift to starve.' The banker groaned, and, turning on his pillow, closed his eyes to shut out conscience, but it would not do; and as his ears were open he heard them expressing fervent hopes for his recovery, and a blessing on his name. The inward voice was again aggravating—so Smith determined to brazen it out, and by future goodness to wipe out past unkindness.—He opened his eyes.

'You are better, now sir?' modestly demanded the dame.

'I am.'

'Oh, sir! indeed we were greatly cut up,' chimed in the old man, 'it was indeed a painful thing to see you, as it were, almost dead; and this is the first opportunity I've had to offer you my humble and heartfelt thanks for your great goodness.'

'God bless you for it,' interrupted the old woman; for old women always interrupt.

'What do you mean?' asked the astonished banker.

'Oh, sir—you are like all gooe men—you soon forget your kind charities; surely you have not forgotten your leniency towards us for three quarters; and then your generosity in admitting it to us, on account of our age, altogether. Ever since then, sir, we have thriven, and hope yet, by the blessing of heaven, to be able to repay.'

'Are they taunting me?' demanded the old man of his conscience; but this time his conscience only gave a twinge, and no reply.

'Ah, sir! here is your kind letter; I never part with it,' sobbed the female Scroope; and she pulled out a crumpled piece of old writing.

'Show it to me,' said the banker: and taking it, he sat up in his bed, and, with marks of irrepressible surprise, read as follows—

Mr. Scroope—I am desired by my employer, Mr Smith, to say that, he has thought fit, in consequence of your long tenancy, your good conduct, and advanced age, to forego the amount of arrears now due to him, amounting to £58 7s. 6d., a receipt for which he sends in form, to prevent any accident or mistakes which may arise hereafter. Mr. S. desires me to say, he does not wish you to thank him, or to allude to the subject; the best gratitude you can show will be silence,

Your obedient servant,

Michael Fleming.

As he concluded, the man of money uttered a deep sigh, and turned his head away.

'Oh, sir! I fear I have offended you in reminding you of your goodness—Oh! how grateful—'

'Silence!' exclaimed old Smith, starting up, 'you distract me. I never authorized that letter; I ordered you to be driven forth —to be plunged into prison—to wander houseless—to starve—oh! I am a wicked old man;' and burying his face in his hands the envied millionaire wept bitterly.'

'Oh, sir! you wrong yourself, you do indeed, else how are we here—why are we not driven out?'

'That's the mystery,' slowly repeated Smith, recovering his composure; 'I can't understand it; I certainly received the full amount;' then, suddenly, as if an idea struck him, he exclaimed, 'I'd give a hundred pounds to see Michael Fleming again.'

'The old woman could no longer contain herself, but bursting out, she exclaimed, 'and well you might, Squire Smith, well you might; for it was just Michael who saved your life last night; and I can't help telling you so, in spite of all the promises I made to keep it secret.'

'Where is he?' anxiously demanded the invalid.

'He's below, with Mary Rigby.'

The banker made a sudden spring; in an instant he had huddled on his great coat and slippers; and quicker than he had moved for years, rushed down stairs leading to the lower rooms.

There stood Michael, taking leave of the weeping Mary.

Did he go?—no! Who is he now? I'll tell you. The apparently surly, imperturable second partner in the house of Smith, Fleming & Co., though sullen in appearance and rigid in his manner, is the warm-hearted, the kind-hearted Michael, who with his wife,

"Does good by stealth,"

and yet would

"Blush to find it fame."

Col. Fremont and his Party.

As a preface to the memoranda we quote below, an introductory geographical description of the route which Col. F. intended to pursue in his effort to reach the Pacific, evidently from the pen of Col. Benton, accompanies the letter. We have no space for it in full, but gather from it that Col. Fremont passed above Spanish peaks, and entered the valley of the Del Norte, high up above the Mexican settlements, and above Pike's stockade, and intended to follow the Del Norte to its head, and cross the Great Rocky Mountain chain through some pass there to be found. He was therefore, so to speak, going into the forks of the mountain—into the gorge of two mountains—and at a great elevation, shown by the fact of the great rivers which issue from the opposite sides of the Rocky Mountains at that part—the Arkansas and Del Norte on the east; the Grand river fork of the Colorado of the gulf of California on the west. It was at this point—the head of the Del Norte—where no traveller had ever gone before, that Col. Fremont intended to pass, to survey his last line across the continent, complete his knowledge of the country between the Mississippi and the Pacific.

In relation to Fremont's design a note says:—The word *gold* is not mentioned is his letters, from one end to the other, nor did he take gold mining the least into his calculation when he left Missouri on the 21st of October last, although the authentic reports brought in by Lt. Beale, of the Navy, were then in all the newspapers, and fully known to him.

"Taos, New Mexico, Feb., 6, 1849.

"After a long delay, which had wearied me to the point of resolving to set out again myself, tidings have at last reached me from my ill-fated party.

"Mr. Vincent Haler came in last night having the night before reached the Little Colorado settlement, with three or four others. Including Mr. King and Mr. Proulx, we have lost eleven of our party.

"Occurrences, since I left them are briefly related so far as they came within the knowledge of Mr. Haler: I say briefly, because I am now unwilling to force my mind to dwell upon the details of what has been suffered. I need reprieve from terrible contemplations. I am absolutely astonished at this persistance of misfortune —this succession of calamities which no care or vigilance of mine could foresee or prevent.

"You will remember that I had left the camp (twenty-three men) when I set off with Godey, Preuss, and my servant, in search of King and succor, with directions about the baggage, and with occupation sufficient about it to employ them for three or four days; after which they were to follow me down the river. Within that time I expected relief from King's party, if it came, at all. They remained seven days, and then started, their scant provisions about exhausted, and the dead mules on the western side of the great Sierra burried under snow.

"Manuel—(you will remember Manuel —a Christian Indian of the Cosumne tribe, in the valley of the Son Joaquin)—gave way to a feeling of despair after they had moved about two miles, and begged Vincent Haler, whom I had left in command, to shoot him. Failing to find death in that form, he turned and made his way back to the camp, intending to die there; which he doubtlesr soon did.

"The party moved on, and at ten miles Wise gave out—threw away his gun and blanket—and, a few hundred yards further, fell over into the snow, and died. Two Indian boys—countrymen of Manuel —were behind. They came upon him —rolled him up in his blanket; and burried him in the snow, on the bank of the river.

"No other died that day. None the next.

"Carver raved during the night—his imagination wholly occupied with images of many things which he fancied himself to be eating. In the morning he wandered off, and probably soon died. He was not seen again.

"Sorrel on this day (the fourth from the camp) laid down to die. They built him a fire, and Morin who was in a dying condition, and snow blind, remained with him. These two did not probably last till next morning. That evening (I think it was) Hubbard killed a deer.

"They travelled on, getting here and there a grouse, but nothing else, the deep snow in the valley having driven off the game.

"The state of the party became desperate, and brought Haler to the determination of breaking it up, in order to prevent them from living upon each other. He told them that he had done all he could for them—that they had no other hope remaining than the expected relief—and that the best plan was to scatter, and make the best of their way, each as he could down the river; that for himself, if he was to be eaten, he would, at all events, be found travelling when he did die. This address had its effect. They accordingly separated.

"With Haler continued five others—Scott, Hubbard, Martin, Bacon, one other, and the two Cosumne Indian boys.

"Rohrer now became despondant, and stopped. Haler reminded him of his family, and urged him to try and hold out for their sake. Roused by this appeal to his tenderest affections, the unfortunate man moved forward, but feebly, and soon began to fall behind. On a further appeal he promised to follow, and to overtake them at evening.

"Hale, Scott, Hubbard, and Martin now agreed that if any one of them should give out the others were not to wait for him to die, but to push on, and try and save themselves. Soon this mournful covenant had to be kept. But let me not anticipate events. Sufficient for each day is the sorrow thereof.

"At night Kerne's party encamped a few hundred yards from Haler's, with the intention, according to Taplin, to remain where they were until the relief should come, and in the meantime to live upon those who had died, and upon the weaker ones as they should die. With this party were the three brothers Kerne, Captain Cat ecart, McKie, Andrews, Stepperfeldt, and Taplin. I do not know that I have got all the names of this party.

"Furguson and Beadle had remained together behind. In the evening, Rohrer came up and remained in Kerne's party. Haler learnt afterwards from some of the party that Rohrer and Andrews wandered off the next morning and died. They say they saw their bodies.

"Haler's party continued on. After a few hours Hubbard gave out. According to the agreement he was left to die, but with such comfort as could be given him. They built him a fire and gathered him some wood, and then left him—without turning their heads, as Haler says, to look at him as they went off

"About two miles further, Scott—you remember him; he used to shoot birds for you on the frontier—he gave out. He was another of the four who had covenanted against waiting for each other. The survivors did for him as they had done for Hubbard, and passed on.

"In the afternoon the two Indian boys went ahead—blessed be these boys!—and before nightfall met Godey with the relief. He had gone on with all speed. The boys gave him the news. He fired signal guns to notify his approach. Haler heard the guns, and knew the crack of our rifles, and felt that relief had come. This night was the first of hope and joy. Early in the morning, with the first gray light, Godey was in the trail, and soon met Haley and the wreck of his party slowly advancing. I hear that they all cried together like children—these men of iron nerves and lion hearts, when dangers were to be faced or hardships to be conquered, They were all children in this moment of melted hearts. Succor was soon dealt out to there few first met; and Godey with his relief, and accompanied by Haler, who turned back, hurredly followed the trail in search of the living and the dead, scattered in the rear. The came to Scott first. He was yet alive, and is saved. They came to Huscand next: he was dead, but still warm. These were the only ones of Haler's party that had been left.

From Kerne's party, next met, they learnt the deaths of Andrews and Rohrer; and, a little further on, met Furguson, who told them that Beadle had died the night before. All the living were found—and saved—Manuel among them which looked like a resurrection—and reduces the number of the dead to ten—one-third of the whole party which a few days before were scaling the mountain with me and battling with the elements twelve thousand feet in the air.

Godey had accomplished his mission for the people; a further service had been prescribed him, that of going to the camp on the river, at the base of the great mountain, to recover the most valuable of the baggage, secreted there. With some Mexicans and pack mules he went on; and this is the last yet heard of him.

Vincent Haler, with Martin and Bacon, all on foot, and bringing Scott on horseback, have just arrived at the outside of Pueblo on the Little Colorado. Provisions for their support, and horses for their transport, were left for the others; who preferred to remain where they were, regaining some strength, till Godey should get back. At the latest, they would have reached the little Pueblo last night. Haler came on to relieve my anxieties, and did well in so doing; for I was wound up to the point of setting out again. When Godey returns I shall know from him all the circumstances sufficiently in detail to understand clearly every thing. But it will not be necessary to tell you any thing further. You have the results, and sorrow enough in reading them.

"*Evening.*—How rapid are the changes of life! A few days ago, and I was struggling through snow in the savage wilds of the upper Del Norte—following the course of the frozen river in more than Russian cold—no food—no blanket to cover me in the long freezing nights—(I had sold my two to the *Utah* for help to my men)—uncertain at what moment of the night we might be roused by the indian rifle—doubtful, very doubtful, whether I should ever see you or friends again. Now I am seated by a comfortable fire, alone—pursuing my own thoughts—writing to you in the certainty of reaching you—a French volume of Balzac on the table—a colored print of the landing of Columbus before me—listening in safety to the raging storm without!

"You will wish to know what effect the scenes I have passed through had upon me. In person none. The destruction of my party, and the loss of friends, are causes of grief; but I have not been injured in body or mind. Both have been strained, and severely taxed, but neither hurt. I have seen one or the other, and sometimes both, give way in strong frames, strong minds, and stout hearts; but, as heretofore, I have come out unhurt. I believe that the remembrance of friends sometimes gives us a power of resistance which the desire to save our own lives could never call up.

"I have made my preparations to proceed. I shall have to follow the old Gila road and shall move rapidly, and expect to be in California in March, and to find letters from home.

February 11.—Godey has got back. He did not succeed in recovering any of the baggage or camp furniture. Every thing was lost except some few things which I had brought down to the river. The depth of the snow made it impossible for him to reach the camp at the mountain where the men had left the baggage. Amidst the wreck, I had the good fortune to save my large *alforgas*, or travelling trunk—the double one which you packed—and that was about all.

"Santa Fe, February 17, 1849.—In the midst of hurried movements, and in the difficult endeavor to get a party all started together, I can only write a line to say that I am well, and moving on to California. I will leave Santa Fe this evening.